Rashi on Joel
רש"י על יואל
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Rashi on Joel

Chapter 1

Verse 1

to Joel son of Pethuel —The son of Samuel the prophet who persuaded God with his prayer (פְּתָה לְאֵל). Some say that this prophecy was said in those seven years in which Elisha said: "For the Lord has decreed a famine etc." and they took place during the days of Jehoram son of Ahab.

Verse 2

Did this come about —I.e., what is mentioned below.

Verse 3

Verse 4

What the shearing locust left over —Gazam, arbeh, yelek, hasil are species of locusts and he prophesied concerning them that they would come in those days and destroy all the fruit of the trees and the herbs of the field.

Verse 5

the strong wine —Heb. עָסִיס, good wine.

Verse 6

For a nation has ascended upon my land —He named these locusts as a host of nations.
and its molars are like those of a young lion —These are the thick teeth with which he chews.

Verse 7

into a disappointment —Heb. לְקֶצֶף, into a disappointment.
he has peeled it and cast it off —He has peeled off the bark of the tree and cast it off until the branches of the vine have become white.

Verse 8

Lament Heb. אֱלִי. Lamentations (קִינָה) is translated into Aramic as אֵילֶנָא.

Verse 9

have been cut off Heb. הָכְרַת, like נִכְרַת. The “hey” vowelized with a short “kamatz” takes the place of a “nun.” Comp. (Job 5:23), “And the beast of the field made peace (הָשְׁלְמָה) with you.”

Verse 10

Verse 11

Be ashamed Heb. הֹבִישׁוּ
plowmen Heb. אִכָּרִים. Those who guide the plowshare.
for wheat and for barley —This refers back to the plowmen, and concerning the vine dressers, he says...

Verse 12

The vines have dried up, and the fig trees have been cut off Heb. הוֹבִישָׁה, it was cut off, its produce terminated.
has dried up Heb. הֹבִישׁ, like שָׁבֵשׁ

Verse 13

Verse 14

Proclaim a fast Heb. קַדְּשׁוּ, designate a fast
an assembly Heb. עֲצָרָה, a gathering.

Verse 15

Woe Heb. אֲהָהּ. An expression of sighing and wailing.
and like plunder Heb. וּכְשֹׁד. Like the plunder of brigands.
it will come —from the Omnipresent.

Verse 16

from before our eyes —I.e., we see it.

Verse 17

have gathered mold Heb. עָבְשׁוּ, have gathered rust and mold. in French moisir, to become moldy.
casks of wine Heb. פְּרֵדוֹת. Jonathan renders: casks of wine.
under their bungs Heb. מָגְרְפֹתֵיהֶם. Jonathan renders: מָגוּפָתֵיהוֹן, the cover of the cask.
the storehouses are laid desolate —I.e. the storehouses of wine and oil.
garners are demolished —Granaries of wheat.

Verse 18

herds of cattle are perplexed —They are confounded. They are closed in and astray in the forests and in the wilderness.
are laid waste Heb. נֶאְשָׁמוּ. have become spoiled through their guilt.

Verse 19

the dwellings of the wilderness Heb. נְאוֹת, an expression of a dwelling (נָוֶה).

Verse 20

cry out Heb. תַּעֲרֹג, will cry out, as Dunash (Teshuvoth Dunash, p. 18) interpreted it: ערג is the cry of the hinds. נהם is the roar of the lions; געה is the lowing of the calves; צהל is the whinnying of the horses; צִפְצוּף is the chirping of the birds, and נבח is the barking of the dogs. [Also the beasts of the field —I.e., the hind of the field.]

Chapter 2

Verse 1

Sound a shophar —to announce to them that they should repent before the evil befalls them.
the day of the Lord —which we mentioned above.

Verse 2

like the dawn, spread over the mountains —The increasing locusts and the shearing locusts are spread over the mountains as the dawn is spread over the entire world.
the like of which has never been —that all these species should come one after the other, but the species of arbeh alone did not equal that of Egypt, concerning which it is stated: (Exodus 10:14) “And after it there shall not be so.”

Verse 3

Fire consumes before it —They destroy everything as though a fire consumes before them and a flame blazes after them.
like the Garden of Eden —was the land before it came, and, after it goes, it leaves the land like a desert wasteland.

Verse 4

Like the appearance of horses is its appearance —I.e., in their running.

Verse 5

like the sound of a flame —A flame, consuming stubble, makes noise.
arrayed for battle Heb. עֲרוּךְ. Since it is in the construct state, it is vowelized with a “hataf segol.”

Verse 6

gather blackness Heb. קִבְּצוּ פָּארוּר. Blackness like a pot, Cf. (Num. 11:8) “And they cooked in a pot (בַּפָּרוּר).” The “aleph” is superfluous, and it is not read.

Verse 7

and they do not make... crooked Heb. וְעַבְּטוּן. This has no comparison, but its interpretation according to its context is: they do not make crooked.

Verse 8

and upon the swords Heb. וּבְעַד הַשֶּׁלַח, (verse 9) "through the windows (בְּעַד הַחַלּוֹנִים)." Upon the weapons they fall and camp.
they do not receive monetary gain Heb. לֹא יִבְצָעוּ. They do not receive monetary gain. And Jonathan interpreted it (הַשֶּׁלַח) as an expression of an errand. Because of the errand of the Holy One, blessed be He, they cast themselves down, and they do not receive monetary gain.

Verse 9

In the city they clatter Heb. יְשֹׁקְקוּ. This is an expression of making a din. Cf. (Isa. 33:4) "like the roaring (כְּמַשַּׁק) of the cisterns"; (Prov. 28: 15) "A growling (שׁוֹקֵק) bear"; (Zeph. 2:9) "the clattering of (מִמְשַׁק) the thorns." Jonathan, however, renders it as an expression of arms (נֶשֶׁק). They are armed.

Verse 10

the heavens tremble —Because of the retribution coming upon Israel, they quake and tremble.
withdraw their shining —Take in their light.

Verse 11

And the Lord gave forth (upon them) His voice —by the statement of His prophets prior to His sending this host of His.
for His camp is great —I.e, the camp He will send against you if you do not improve.

Verse 12

Verse 13

and not your garments —for I do not pay heed to the rending of your garments. Another explanation: Rend your hearts and you will not need to rend your garments because of mourning.
and He repents of the evil —I.e., He turns to another thought.

Verse 14

Whoever knows —that he is guilty of iniquity.
shall return and repent, and it shall leave —I.e., the hasil and the gazam will leave a blessing after it; through the repentance, a blessing will come in the produce.

Verse 15

Verse 16

assemble the elders Heb. קַבְּצוּ. This is of the form of (I Kings 18:19) "Send and gather (קְבֹץ) for me," an expression which is weak and light.

Verse 17

a derision Heb. לְחֶרְפָּה

for nations to make them an example Heb. לְמָשָׁל, an expression of, (Deut. 28:37) "for an example (מָשָׁל) and for a conversation piece."

Verse 18

And the Lord was zealous for His land Heb. וַיְקַנֵּא, an expression similar to (Num. 11:29) "Are you zealous (הַמְקַנֵּא) for me?" Their distress entered His heart, and He fought their battle and engaged in their necessities. Our Sages explain it as an expression of warning. He warned the locusts concerning His land. [from Sotah 3a]

Verse 19

derision Heb. חֶרְפָּה, a derision, that they will call you ill-provided.

Verse 20

And the northerner Heb. הַצְּפוֹנִי. This can be interpreted as referring to the host of locusts, upon which the expression, "and I will drive him to a land barren and desolate," fits aptly. Another explanation: The people that come from the north, viz., the kings of Assyria. And our Sages (Sukkah 52a) state: This is the temptation, which is hidden (צָפוּן) in a person's heart.
the western sea the eastern sea. And our Sages, who interpreted it [i.e., הַצְּפוֹנִי] as a reference to temptation, interpreted these two seas as the First Temple and the Second Temple. I.e, they explain הַקַּדְמוֹנִי as first and הָאַחֲרוֹן as last. And so they explained it: Because he directed his face toward the First Temple and the Second Temple and destroyed them. [God says: I will drive him out to a land barren and desolate, where he will find no one to incite. That will be because he set his sights for the First Temple and for the Second Temple and, because he incited the people to sin, they were destroyed. The two Temples, where everyone would gather during the three Pilgrimage Festivals, are symbolized by the sea, where water of the streams gather.] And, according to the Targum, who explains it as a reference to the king of Assyria, we must explain "his face to the eastern sea, and his end to the western sea" to mean that part of his army I will send to the east and part of it to the west.
its ill savor Heb. וְעָלָה בְאְשׁוֹ. The word בְאְשׁוֹ, its stench, indicates concerning that it is an expression of filth.
for it did great things —I.e, it did a great evil, for it stretched forth its hands upon the great.

Verse 21

Have no fear, O land —I.e, the land of Israel, when you repent.

Verse 22

Verse 23

the teacher for justification Heb. מוֹרֶה. Your prophets who teach you to return to Me, in order to justify you.
the early rain and the late rain. Heb. מוֹרֶה, like (Deut. 11:14) "the early rain (יוֹרֶה) and the late rain (וּמַלְקוֹשׁ)."
in the first month —In Nissan. Although the early rain is the first rain, which falls on the seeds, and that is in Marcheshvan, that year they sowed in Nissan, as is explained in Tractate Taanith (5a) that the grain grew in eleven days.

Verse 24

shall roar Heb. וְהֵשִׁיקוּ, an expression of making noise when the stream runs down from the winepress into the vat (הַיֶּקֶב), which is the pit before the winepress

Chapter 3

Verse 1

And it shall come to pass afterwards —in the future.
upon all flesh —I.e, upon anyone whose heart becomes soft as flesh. Comp. (Ezekiel 36:26) "And I will give you a heart of flesh."

Verse 2

Verse 3

and pillars of smoke Heb. וְתִימָרוֹת. Perpendicular pillars of smoke, as tall as a palm tree.

Verse 4

shall turn to darkness —to embarrass those who prostrate themselves to the sun.

Verse 5

And it shall come to pass that whoever shall call etc. as... said —And where did He say it? (Deut. 28:10), "And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the Name of the Lord is called on you." [from Mechilta, Ex. 12:25]
and among the survivors —And in the remnant that will remain.
whom the Lord invites Heb. קֹרֵא, an expression of those invited to a banquet or to the service of the king, an expression of invitation.

Chapter 4

Verse 1

Verse 2

to the Valley of Jehoshaphat —I will descend with them to the depth of justice. Jehoshaphat —The judgments of the Lord.

Verse 3

they cast lots Heb. יִדּוּ. Like (Lam. 3:53) "And they cast (וַיִּדּוּ) a stone upon me."

Verse 4

Are you paying Me recompense —Is this the recompense for what Solomon gave Hiram, the king of Tyre, twenty cities (I Kings 9:11)?
swiftly Heb. קַל מְהֵרָה, an expression of eagerness.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

to the Shebaites —To the children of Sheba.
for the Lord has spoken —Now where did He speak? (Gen. 9:25) "A slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers." So it is explained in Mechilta (Ex. 12:25).

Verse 9

prepare war —if you can wage war against Me.

Verse 10

your plowshares Heb. אִתֵּיכֶם, koltres in O.F:, colters.
and your pruning hooks Heb. וּמַזְמֵרוֹתֵיכֶם, serpes in French.

Verse 11

Gather Heb. עוּשׁוּ. Like חוּשׁוּ, hasten, so did Menahem associate it. Jonathan, however, renders: they shall gather, and I say that it is an expression of a block of iron (עֶשֶׁת), which is gathered together, masse in French, and the "tav" is not a radical.
there the Lord shall break your mighty men Heb. הַנְחֵת. There in the gathering of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, He will break your might. So did Jonathan render it, but I do not know whether it is an Aramaic expression of lowering (נחת) or an expression of breaking (חתת), and the "nun" is defective. Cf. (Dan. 2:25) "brought Daniel in (הֶעֱלָה) before the king," which has no radical but על.

Verse 12

Verse 13

Stretch out a sickle etc. —Draw the swords, you who go on My mission to destroy the nations.
for the harvest is ripe —I.e, for their time has arrived, and he compared the matter to harvest, which is harvested with sickles when it becomes completely ripe.
come press for the winepress is full —of grapes. Come and tread them; i.e., the measure of their iniquity is full. press Heb. רְדוּ, an

expression of pressing [or ruling]. Cf. (Gen. 1:28) "And rule (וּרְדוּ) over the fish of the sea."
and the vats shall roar —The sound of the stream of the wine going down in the vats before the winepresses is heard.

Verse 14

in the valley of decision —For there it is decided that the judgment is true. And so did Jonathan render: the valley of judgment.

Verse 15

have withdrawn their shining —Have taken in their shining.

Verse 16

shall roar from Zion —Because of what they did to Zion.
and the heavens and earth shall quake —He will deal retribution upon the heavenly princes and then upon the nations.
a shelter Heb. מַוֶּטָה, an expression of a cover, abrier in O.F., abri in modern French, a shelter.

Verse 17

Verse 18

springs Heb. אֲפִיקֵי, a place of the source of water.
and water the valley of Shittim —According to its apparent meaning, and it will water the valley of Shittim (Targum), and, according to its Midrashic meaning, He will atone for the iniquity of Peor.

Verse 19

Egypt etc. and Edom —He juxtaposed them as regards their retribution. You find that, were it not for Egypt, Edom would not exist, as it is stated: (I Kings 11:16 21) "For Joab and all Israel remained [stationed] there for six months etc. every male in Edom." And it is stated there: (verse 17) "Adad fled, he and some Edomite men etc. And Hadad pleased Pharaoh very much etc. And Hadad etc. that David slept with his fathers etc." And, at the end, (verse 25) "And he was an adversary to Solomon (sic)." Said the Holy One, blessed be He: I will destroy both of them.
because of the violence done to the children of Judah —Because of the violence they did to the children of Judah, viz., that they shed their blood.

Verse 20

Verse 21

Now should I cleanse, their blood I will not cleanse —Even if I cleanse them of other sins in their hands, and of the evils they have done to Me, I will not cleanse them of the blood of the children of Judah. When will this come to pass? At the time the Holy One, blessed be He, dwells in Zion.